

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007EDU0041-000328
March 27, 2007

Ministry of Education

PROVINCE HONOURS 14 OUTSTANDING B.C. TEACHERS

VICTORIA – Education Minister Shirley Bond recognized the 14 B.C. recipients of the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence at a ceremony in the legislature today as part of Education Week in B.C.

"These teachers are wonderful examples of the high calibre of teachers in this province," said Bond. "They represent a wide variety of experience and expertise and, in their own special way, each has contributed to improving student achievement in this province."

The 14 teachers are:

- Briar Ballou, a science teacher at Handsworth secondary in North Vancouver.
- Lorraine Baron, an advanced placement math and calculus teacher at Mount Boucherie secondary in Kelowna.
- Linda Beaven, a performance teacher at Summerland secondary school.
- Sharon Conrad, a fine arts teacher at Brookwood secondary in Langley.
- Jim Cram, a science, math, history and geography teacher at Ladysmith secondary.
- Brent Cameron, co-founder of SelfDesign Learning Community.
- Dr. Kathleen Forsythe, a teacher with SelfDesign Learning Community.
- Don Hutchinson, a physical education teacher at Montgomery middle school in Coquitlam.
- Andrew Lum, a teacher-librarian at North Delta secondary school.
- Christina MacDonald, the kindergarten - Grade 7 teacher at San Josef elementary teacher in Holberg.
- Michael Maser, a teacher with SelfDesign Learning Community.
- Maryam Moayeri, currently a doctoral student, researcher and teacher at the University of British Columbia, who taught at West Vancouver secondary.
- Antonio Vendramin, now a vice-principal at Holly elementary school in Surrey.
- Janet Williams, formerly a social studies teacher at MacKenzie secondary and now the principal of MacKenzie elementary school.

"It is important that we recognize the talent and dedication of exceptional teachers," said Bond. "Today's ceremony and the Premier's Award for Teaching Excellence announced yesterday are two of the ways we are thanking people who make a huge difference for students in this province."

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Today's ceremony was one in a series of events during Education Week to celebrate the excellence and innovation taking place in B.C.'s schools. During Education Week in 2008, Premier Gordon Campbell will announce the first-ever recipients of the Premier's Award for Teaching Excellence.

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To view Minister Bond's Education Week video, please visit
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/videos/sbond/2007/070326_educationweek.htm.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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BACKGROUND

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PROVINCE HONOURS 14 OUTSTANDING TEACHERS

Briar Ballou, a science teacher at Handsworth secondary school, was recognized for her work as a facilitator for work experience opportunities for students in applied science and her mentorship in technology topics related to science. Ballou thrives on challenging students to think outside the box and strives to show her students emerging ideas and concepts in science.

Lorraine Baron, an advanced placement math and calculus teacher at Mount Boucherie secondary, was recognized for her success in finding innovative ways to help students and teachers to understand complex methods of calculus. Baron has developed study-guide resources that organize the required concepts of each course in a clear and logical order; she posts learning materials created by herself and students on web sites for other teachers and students to reference and encourages students to explore the Internet for resources to be used in the classroom. She uses several different teaching methods to help her students make sense of the math that they are learning.

Linda Beaven, a performance teacher at Summerland secondary, was recognized for her many achievements including founding the Goodwill Shakespeare Festival, which provides almost 350 student from around the province an opportunity to participate in workshops and performances put on by professional and post-graduate theatre specialists. Beaven was also recognized for her leadership in helping students to see beyond physical disabilities when she had scripts translated into brail for a blind student who wanted to try acting. The student was so successful that he was cast to a major role in the Grade 12 production of "Flickering Shadows." More than 50 of her students have gone on to successful careers in theatre and the arts.

Sharon Conrad, a fine arts teacher at Brookwood secondary, was recognized for using challenging and difficult material for students in order to move them out of their comfort zone and into places of true learning and discovery. She uses group work to build communication skills, respect, tolerance and teamwork among peers. Under her guidance, Grade 12 students have the opportunity to write plays and then cast other students to fill the roles. This provides older students with new challenges and gives younger students the opportunity to draw on the experience of the seniors.

Jim Cram, a science, math, history and geography teacher at Ladysmith secondary, was recognized for his work in developing and promoting the Pathfinders lab at Ladysmith secondary. The lab allows students to take courses designed to meet graduation requirements and work independently within fields that interest them. Cram also developed specific packages of materials to assist those who require special courses for their post-secondary studies – courses which the school would not have been able to offer in a classroom setting. As well, Cram has begun work on the redesign of the learning lab using Web CT to create an e-learning component. Web CT has given the school the ability to work closely with the Chemunui First Nation students who are unable to attend school.

Brent Cameron, a co-founder of SelfDesign Learning Community, a ministry-certified, Internet-based, independent school. He is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of British Columbia researching and documenting SelfDesign as a new way of understanding human learning. For the past 25 years he has been researching and developing learning-community projects with children and families as a basis for educational transformation. In 2006, he and his partner Barbara Meyer wrote "SelfDesign: Nurturing Genius through Natural Learning." Currently, Cameron is working in the United States with groups interested in SelfDesign.

Dr. Kathleen Forsythe, an educator with SelfDesign Learning Community, has been an educator in B.C. for the past 32 years and was a founding executive director of B.C.'s Knowledge Network. She has also worked with the Greater Victoria school district, North Island College and is currently a B.C. Agent for B.C. Independent Schools in China. Forsythe is currently working in the support of families with children on the Autistic Spectrum. She is a published poet, writer and an artist working in mixed media.

Don Hutchinson, a physical education teacher at Montgomery middle school, was recognized for his innovative teaching methods like the Sportfolio, a journal of students' goals and activities he incorporates into his physical education classes. Students are encouraged to record their heart rates and physical fitness levels and monitor improvements throughout the year. Parents have access to this information and are kept up-to-date as to the progress of their child's physical development. Hutchinson also has the students choose an athlete they see as a role model and create a PowerPoint to show to the class.

Andrew Lum, a teacher-librarian at North Delta secondary school, was recognized for enriching learning opportunities through online resources, activities, WebQuests and video streaming that stimulate learning and motivation. Lum encourages students to take ownership of their learning and encourages collaboration to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. In addition to teaching, Lum assists with the boy's rugby program, is organizing a school trip to China and is finishing a documentary on WWII in China.

Christina MacDonald teaches in a one-room school house 52 km outside of Port Hardy via a one-way gravel road. She teaches 17 students in Kindergarten to Grade 7, two of whom are her own. MacDonald believes that self-esteem, and a sense of pride goes a long way in helping students learn, so she encourages positive thinking and school pride. To achieve this, she organizes fund raisers for new computers, playground equipment, swimming lessons and a major bi-annual field trip. This year's trip was to Camp Homewood on Quadra Island, where students took part in canoeing, hiking, marksmanship, outdoor living, and an obstacle course.

Michael Maser, an educator with SelfDesign Learning Community, has worked as an educator for the past 20 years, 12 of which have been spent working on projects for the Wondertree Foundation for Natural Learning. Michael co-founded and help direct the award-winning Virtual High Learning Community, developed as an alternative program for teens in Vancouver. Vitruel High, and holistic learning were the subject of Maser's Master's thesis at Simon Fraser University in 1997. Michael has previously worked as a classroom teacher, professional writer, journalist, researcher and geologist.

Maryam Moayeri, currently a doctoral student, researcher and teacher at the University of British Columbia, was recognized for promoting student achievement by encouraging her students to enter contests and competitions and providing them with assistance and coaching. The hands-on learning experiences, such as reconstructing the classroom into a newspaper headquarters, have enhanced her students' educational experience and achievement. Her students' accomplishments include:

- Winning the Vancouver Sun "Create a Classroom Newspaper Contest" three consecutive years.
- Out of 11,000 students, three of her students received individual awards in the "Canada Book Week Contest." Students placed second and third in the book cover portion of the contest, while the third student placed third in the essay portion.
- Four students placed first in the "Exploravision Contest" and appeared in USA Today for inventing a prosthesis to assist throat cancer victims in communication.

With Maryam's coaching, Tracy Hinder placed fifth in Canada and travelled to Washington, D.C. in the Scripps Howard Spelling Bee.

Antonio Vendramin, now a vice-principal at Holly elementary school in Surrey, was recognized for his communication with parents and students, particularly through his class website, and for his use of real-life experiences in lessons. Vendramin encouraged his students to take the lead in school-wide fundraisers and often included them in developing criteria for assignments. In addition to being an educator, Vendramin is also a student, having completed his Masters Degree at Royal Roads University in 2006 and a technology diploma at Simon Fraser University in 2000.

Janet Williams, formerly a social studies teacher at Mackenzie secondary and now the principal of Mackenzie elementary school, was recognized for inspiring her colleagues to use technology more readily in their classrooms, facilitating student to student mentoring and for being the driving force behind the school's writing contest. Her review entitled "Students informed, motivated by Challenging McWorld," was recently published in the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Monitor.

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